Course Overview:

English 395 is an advanced writing class designed to help students transition from college-level writing into “real world” professional wiring and communication. You will be exposed to advanced research resources and strategies unique to the health professions, and learn how to produce high-quality professional documents such as cover letters and resumes, personal statements, project proposals, and review articles. In all of these writing endeavors, the focus will be on tailoring the specific document to meet the needs of its specific audience. Finally, this class will give you the opportunity to reacquaint yourself with foundational writing issues (drafting, revising, and editing), as well as the essentials of style and grammar.

Reflecting a long-standing concern of the University of Maryland, sustainability issues will be used as a lens to develop critical thinking skills relevant to writing about medicine and health.

Prerequisites: English 101 or equivalent and a minimum of 60 credits.

Required Texts:

Learning Outcomes:

This course fulfills the University’s Fundamental Studies Professional Writing Requirement. As stated in the University’s Plan for General Education (http://www.provost.umd.edu/GenEdReport/GenEdPublic-Dec2010.pdf, see Appendices p. 35), students should be able to perform the following tasks upon completing this course:

1. Analyze a variety of professional rhetorical situations and produce appropriate texts in response.
2. Understand the stages required to produce competent, professional writing through planning, drafting, revising and editing.
3. Identify and implement the appropriate research methods for each writing task. Students do research for each writing assignment.
4. Practice the ethical use of sources and the conventions of citation appropriate to each genre.
5. Write for the intended readers of a text, and design or adapt text to audience who may differ in their familiarity with the subject matter.
6. Demonstrate competence in Standard Written English, including grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, coherence, and document design (including the use of the visual) and be able to use this knowledge to revise texts.

7. Produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.

The learning outcomes associated with each major writing assignment are listed in parentheses after each assignment description (e.g., “6” would indicate that the assignment focuses on improving Standard Written English).

**Course Philosophy: Health, Medicine, and Sustainability**

If you are taking this particular section of Professional Writing, then you presumably intend to enter one of the health professions—medicine, an allied health field, or public health. In your future day-to-day work lives, you may often think about very specific issues—how do I treat this particular patient, how do I implement this particular public health policy etc. This individualistic focus is very much part of the culture of the health care field. There is ample evidence, however, that the current health care field could still be improved. In medicine, expensive high-tech care is not necessarily the “best” care; in public health, expensive campaigns sometimes do little to move the general population toward more health-promoting activities. What is missing is system thinking: how should all the components be arranged to benefit not only individual patients, but also not waste society’s finite resources—both now and in the future? Without this shift in focus, our current health care delivery system is unsustainable.

As a campus, the University of Maryland is in the vanguard of sustainability issues; the university received a “Gold Rating” from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. One aspect of this focus is the Chesapeake Project, which is a professional development activity that encourages faculty to integrate sustainability issues “across the curriculum.” In May of 2014, your instructor took part in the Chesapeake Project, and has revised this course accordingly.

While sustainability issues are often discussed in terms of preserving the environment, they are just as central to health promotion and the delivery of medical care. Furthermore, environmental concerns impinge directly on health issues—both negatively and positively. Changes in the environment can transform the “ecology of disease” in ways that lead to new health threats; conversely, sustaining the environment is necessary to ensure an adequate food supply. As some scholars have argued, cleaning up the environment and increases in agricultural productivity have actually been more “health promoting” (in terms of increased longevity) than specifically “medical” interventions after patients have become sick.

In the assignments for this course, I would like you to couple these sustainability themes with either medical practice or public health. If you focus on medicine, you could design a proposal to show how system thinking can improve the efficiency, delivery, and long-term sustainability of health care services in a clinical setting; you might consider drawing on your own internship and/or physician shadowing experiences. If you focus on public health, consider how
sustainability ideas interact synergistically with health promotion (e.g., food production), or how changes in the environment can impact the ecology of disease.

Regardless of your focus, you will have to develop a series of arguments that can anticipate (and rebut) the traditionally individualistic focus of much clinical thinking; by introducing a “systems approach,” you are implicitly trying to introduce a paradigm shift in this field of professional endeavor. As such, you will have to execute many of the tasks listed among the course’s learning outcomes—for instance, adapting text to audience and “produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.”

Course Expectations: Writing, Revising, and Thinking (an interactive loop)

Writing is learned through practice, which means (as a consequence) that there will be multiple writing assignments throughout the semester. As the Professional Writing Program website indicates, “In every PWP course, students write and revise four to six major assignments for a total of approximately 25 pages of formal graded writing per student.” The specifics for each of these writing assignments are provided as a separate document posted on ELMS/Canvas. As you will see, many of these writing assignments involve the completion of a first draft, which will then be commented on by one of your classmates. There are (at least) three reasons for getting feedback prior to final submission of any written document:

1) Every piece of writing can be improved with revision;
2) Writing is an inherently social activity (between a writer and a reader); and
3) The best way, as a writer, to enhance the likelihood of being understood is to craft text in ways that conform to your readers’ expectations.

In all of the writing assignments, the ability to tailor information to suit the needs of an audience will be primary in determining the grade, with individual grades determined based on the following general rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Criteria Used To Determine Letter Grades on Individual Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written papers will be awarded a grade of “A” if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They introduce information that is directly relevant for the audience, and package it in a way that explicitly addresses the needs of the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written papers will be awarded a grade of “B” if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They introduce information that is directly relevant for the audience, but they force readers to “connect the dots” to see why the information is relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written papers will be awarded a grade of “C” if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They introduce information that is only partially relevant for the needs of the audience. The readers not only have to “connect the dots” for information that is relevant, but also sift through what information that needs to be discarded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above criteria will be used as a general guide to assign grades based on the quality of content in written assignments. However, I reserve the right to lower the assigned grade by up to a letter if the submitted product is professionally substandard (e.g., it has spelling, punctuation, or grammar error, has inadequate citations etc.). How these general criteria will be applied in assessing specific assignments is discussed in more detail in the Assignment section of the course space on ELMS. General description of undergraduate letter grades can be found at http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1534.

Each assignment will be given a numerical score (including fractional values) with 100 points possible at the end of the semester. Your final numerical score will be translated into a final course letter grade based on the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I do “round up” final grades to the nearest integer when scores are “0.5” or higher. In other words, a final grade of “93.5” would be awarded an “A” and an “89.5” would be awarded an “A-.”

Assignments Schedule, Approximate Page Lengths, and Grade Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>No. of Pages</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) First Reflection Essay</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Reader Expectation Theory Essay</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9/16, 9/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Resume/Cover Letter/Personal Statement</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/30, 10/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Website on Health Issue</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10/28, 11/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Second Reflection Essay</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Memos Outlining Group Project (2)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/30, 11/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Review Article</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11/11, 11/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Oral Presentation</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Final Reflective Essay</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Final Project—Individual Component</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Final Project—Group Component</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>12/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Weekly Low Stakes Writing</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>c. 5</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure of 160 minute class sessions: Each class will be broken into two parts (labelled Part I and Part II below) of approximately 75 minutes each. There will be a 10 minute break between the parts around 10:15 am. In general, part I will involve more “formal” instruction and in-class exercises; part II will involve more participatory and group activities, i.e., more “active learning” that builds on earlier assignments. After the introduction of Reader Expectation Theory in the first part of the course, the amount of “formal” instruction (from the teacher) will decrease; the focus will then be on writing/peer reviewing/revising of on-going writing projects. Thematicaly, the course is divided into 3 modules that are meant to build on each other in the following manner:

- Reader expectation theory will teach revision as a way to improve clarity of expression;
- Ecological medicine and public health will teach how to evaluate sources and critical thinking skills; and
- The Public Health Campaign will apply the skills developed in the first two modules to design a report tailored to a real-world audience.

Course Schedule:

Module I: Writing for General Reader Expectations

9/2—Part I: Introduction & Course Overview; Exorcising “Miss Grundy”
Style, Lessons 1 & 2

Part II: Framing Disease & Stasis Theory (Review)
Before class, read Charles E. Rosenberg, “Framing Disease: Illness, Society, and History,” review Stasis Theory (two videos), and respond to Discussion Board prompt
Due on 9/7: First Reflection Essay

9/9—Part I: Nominalizations, Sentence Structure, Sentence-to-Sentence Connection, and Paragraphs
Style, Lessons 3-6, 8

Part II: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos
Before class, read Danielle Ofri, “Common Ground” (Canvas), review links on Rhetorical Triangle (Ethos, Pathos, and Logos), and respond to Discussion Board prompt.

9/16—Part I: Writing Introductions & Conclusions and Go Over Homework
Style, Lessons 7;

Part II: Due: Reader Expectation Theory and Professional Writing (first draft)
Before class, review videos on the Peer Review Process (online); in class, submit two peer commentaries and participate in post peer review class discussion.
9/23—Part I: Writing a Resume, Cover Letter, and Personal Statement (RCLP)
“Practical Writing” from Oxford English Dictionary (OED) (Canvas)
Due: Reader Expectation Theory and Professional Writing (final draft)

Part II: Library Database Research Strategies
Quiz on Library Modules by the end of the day—11:59 pm.

9/30—Part I: Due: Resume, Cover Letter, and Personal Statement (RCLP)(first draft)
Online peer review of RCLP

Part II: Group Formation and Brainstorming for Final Project. Send first memo to the instructor by the end of the day (11:59 pm)

Module II: Developing Writing, Research, and Critical Thinking Skills: A Case Study Using Ecological Medicine and Public Health
10/7—Part I: Toulmin’s Model of Arguments & the Ecology of Disease
Due: Resume, Cover Letter, and Personal Statement (final version)
Before class, Skim Session I “Redefining Health” in Research, Writing, and Thinking about Ecological Medicine and Public Health (RWTEMPH, course ebook)
In class, watch The Daily Show, “An Outbreak of Liberal Idiocy” (aired on June 2, 2014), “NIH—A Celebration of Science” (on NIH website), and participate in class discussion.

Part II: As an in-class exercise, analyze the article “The Rabies Principle” (RWTEMPH) based on the Toulmin model, and post a brief essay on the Discussion Board.

10/14—The Rhetorical Situation and Systems Thinking
Part I: The Rhetorical Situation
Before class: read Bitzer’s essay “The Rhetorical Situation,” the first three articles in Session two in RWTEMPH (by McDaniel, Chivian/Bernstein, Almendares/Epstein), as well as the article linked to in this module by Anthony J. McMichael, “Population health as the ‘bottom line’ of sustainability: a contemporary challenge for public health researchers,” and respond to Discussion Board prompt
In class: Participate in class discussion

Part II: Systems Thinking and its Relationship to Medicine and Public Health
In-class, watch the following videos: Atul Gawande, “How do we heal medicine?” (Ted Talk, filmed February 2012) and Annie Leonard, “The Story of Stuff,” and participate in class discussion

10/21—Writing about Health Issues for Lay Audience; Visual Rhetoric and Presentation of Data
Part I: Critiquing Weight Loss from a Systems Perspective
Before class: Complete Critiquing Weight Loss Assignment
In class: Perform Peer Review and participate in class discussion
Part II: Designing Health Education Materials and Writing for a Lay Audience
10/28—\textit{Part I:} Peer Review of \textbf{Website on Health and Medicine (first draft)}

\textit{Part II:} Background to a Public Health Campaign

\textbf{Due:} Second Reflection Essay

\textit{Module III: Planning a Public Health Campaign}

11/4—\textit{Part I:} Writing a Review Article

\textit{Part II:} Writing a Grant Proposal

\textbf{Due:} Website on Health and Medicine (final version)

11/11—\textit{Part I:} Peer Review of \textbf{Review Article (first draft)}

\textit{Part II:} Authorship and awarding credit in Professional Publications

\textbf{Due:} Second Memo on Proposed Topic of Final Group Project (by 11:59 pm on 11/16)

11/18—\textbf{Due: Final Version of Review Article}

\textit{Part I:} Individual Consultation between instructor and each student (10 minutes)

\textit{Part II:} Work in class on Final Group Project.

12/2—Oral Presentations of Group Projects

12/9—“Post-Mortem” on Oral Presentations & Final Concerns

\textbf{Due: Final Reflective Essay}

\textbf{Final Paper/Exam:} Because this is a writing course, the final group paper will serve as the final examination for the course. As such, it must be submitted (online through Canvas) no later than the end of the examination time scheduled for this course on Testudo. Specifically, this means that the final group paper must be submitted no later than 10:00 am on Friday, December 16, 2016. Only one submission per group is required (i.e., it can be submitted on behalf of the group by any group member).

As per university policy, a student may seek to reschedule final examinations so that he or she has no more than three (3) examinations on any given day. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the rescheduling or be responsible for taking the examination as originally scheduled. If this situation applies to any student in this class, then the group as a whole should contact the instructor to initiate rescheduling.
General Course Procedures and Policies:
For a more detailed discussion of the policies below (as articulated by the university), see http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html

Communication about this course: Your instructor will use email to convey important information, and students are responsible for keeping their email address up to date, and must ensure that forwarding to another address functions properly. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding, and returned email are the responsibility of the student, and do not constitute an excuse for missing announcements or deadlines.

Online submission of course work
Although we will be meeting in the traditional face-to-face format, all assignments will be submitted online in the course space in ELMS. In addition to saving paper, this will ensure that there is a complete record of each student’s work.

Use of Electronic Devices
As a “studio” class, there will be in-class activities that require Internet access (e.g., peer review of online submissions). In these instances, the use of electronic devices is expected. For class activities that do not require online access (e.g., class discussion of assigned reading), electronic devices should be put away.

Conferences
There will be two conferences with the instructor during the semester. The first conference will be in class on November 18, and it will involve a 10 minute meeting with each individual student. The second conference will be after the oral presentation on the last day of class, December 9. You are welcome to make further arrangements to meet with me to discuss your work and your progress (about any assignment). In addition, you are encouraged to meet with fellow students outside class time in face-to-face or virtual environments to plan together.

Professionalism, Attendance Policies, and Class Participation

Just as the writing assignments are meant to model “real world” professional writing experiences, so likewise should in-class conduct model professional behavior. Specifically, this means that students are expected to do the assigned readings, be on time, and be prepared to contribute to the class discussions and in-class exercises on a regular basis. In addition to demonstrating professionalism, consistent attendance and participation offers students the most effective opportunity to gain command of course concepts and materials. Conversely, irregular attendance without a university-sanctioned excuse means that students will not be able to make up the missed material. Given that there will be a graded event nearly every week, this means that excessive unexcused absences will adversely affect a student’s grade. Students who miss two full weeks of material will find it extremely difficult to make up the required work.
**Excused Absences and unexcused absences:** As per university policy, there are recognized excused absences for which a student will be granted an accommodation. Events that justify an excused absence include the following:

- Religious observances
- Mandatory military obligation
- Illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member
- Participation in university activities at the request of university authorities
- Compelling circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance)

Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.

Students claiming an excused absence must notify the course instructor in a timely manner and provide appropriate documentation. The notification should be provided either prior to the absence or as soon afterwards as possible. In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student must inform the instructor during the schedule adjustment period. All other absences must be reported as soon as is practical. The student must provide appropriate documentation of the absence. The documentation must be provided in writing to the instructor as described below.

**Absence due to Medically Necessary Procedure:** In general, students are expected to inform the instructor in advance of medically necessary absences (e.g., planned surgery etc.) and present a self-signed note documenting the date of the missed class(es) and testifying to the need for the absence. This note must include an acknowledgement that (a) the information provided is true and correct, and (b) that the student understands that providing false information to University officials is a violation of Part 9(h) of the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s policies on medical and other absences can be found at: [http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540](http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540)

**Absence for one class due to your own illness:** The university requires that you provide me a self-signed note attesting to the date of your illness, with an acknowledgment that the information provided is true. Providing false information to University officials is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. The Health Center has an online form ([http://www.health.umd.edu/sites/default/files/Medical_attestation_5-2016.pdf](http://www.health.umd.edu/sites/default/files/Medical_attestation_5-2016.pdf)).

**Absence from more than one class because of the same illness:** You must provide written documentation of the illness from the health care provider who made the diagnosis. No diagnostic information shall be given. The provider must verify dates of treatment and indicate the time frame during which you were unable to meet academic responsibilities.

**Non-consecutive medically necessitated absences from more than a single class:** Such absences may be excused provided you submit written documentation for each absence as described above, verifying the dates of treatment and time frame during which you were unable
to meet your academic responsibilities. However, as also noted above, if you miss too many classes—even if excused—it may become too difficult to make up the work as a practical matter.

**Special Flu Season Policy:**
No one should endanger themselves or others by attending class when they are sick. Anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms should not come to class. The only requirement is that the instructor MUST be notified by email PRIOR to the class missed. All such cases will be granted a no-penalty excuse from class. No doctor’s note is required. Appropriate accommodations will be made for missed assignments.

**Tardiness.** In the professional world tardiness is not tolerated. However, this campus is large, and another instructor may keep you late. So if you do arrive late on occasion, do not disrupt class, and let me know by the end of the schedule adjustment period if you anticipate ongoing conflicts. Remember that it is your responsibility to catch up on your own time, not the class’s. Unless a legitimate excuse can be provided, missed material due to tardiness cannot be made up.

**Late Papers:** Papers are due by the announced times as indicated on their assignment sheets and in the course space. Low stakes preparatory assignments cannot be made up (unless there is a legitimate excuse as outlined above); however, major writing assignments will still be accepted late—subject to a letter grade penalty (10%) per day of lateness, including the first one.

**Course Evaluations**
Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)) is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University. Because CourseEvalUm does not ask specific questions useful to the Professional Writing Program, I will ask you to fill out a different, also confidential, evaluation in class. Both evaluations are important for separate audiences and somewhat separate purposes, and I appreciate your participation in this process.

**Academic integrity:** The UMD Honor Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).*

Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council: [http://www.shc.umd.edu](http://www.shc.umd.edu). If the Student Honor Council determines that this is an instance of academic dishonesty, then the student will receive no credit for the assignment in question.

**Disability Support:** Students with a documented disability should inform the instructors within the add-drop period if academic accommodations will be needed. NB: You are expected to meet with your instructor in person to provide them with a copy of the *Accommodations Letter* and to
obtain your instructor’s signature on the Acknowledgement of Student Request form. You and your instructor will plan together how accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester. To obtain the required Accommodation Letter, please contact Disability Support Service (DSS) at 301-314-7682 or dissup@umd.edu

**Copyright notice:** Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted. They may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor. Copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

**Emergency protocol/loss of internet access:** If the university is physically closed for an extended period of time, then this course will migrate online as much as feasible. If extended loss of internet access occurs, then there would be no penalties for missed due dates during the time of non-access.

**Academic accommodations for students who experience sexual misconduct:**
The University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence as defined by the University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy. To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405-1142. If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741-3555. As ‘responsible university employees’ faculty are required to report any disclosure of sexual misconduct, i.e., they may not hold such disclosures in confidence. For more information: [http://www.umd.edu/ocrsm/](http://www.umd.edu/ocrsm/)

**Diversity:**
The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body. Along with the University, I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate.